

Message Text

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SUBJ: MAJOR EXPORT OPPORTUNITY: OIL & GAS EXPLORATION IN
AFGHANISTAN

1. ABDUL WAHAB ASEFI, MINISTER OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES, HAS ASKED THIS EMBASSY TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION REGARDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPLORATION OF OIL AND GAS IN AFGHANISTAN. USDOC AND EMBASSY ADDRESSEES PLEASE INFORM U.S. OIL COMPANIES IN YOUR AREAS.

2. AFGHANISTAN IS CURRENTLY PRODUCING APPROXIMATELY THREE BILLION CUBIC METERS OF NATURAL GAS ANNUALLY, PRIMARILY FOR DIRECT EXPORT TO THE USSR. THEIR GAS DEPOSITS HAVE ALL BEEN DISCOVERED AND EXPLOITED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE USSR, AND ALL LIE IN THE NORTH OF AFGHANISTAN, BORDERING THE USSR. THEY HAVE ALSO DISCOVERED, AND PLAN TO EXPLOIT FOR DOMESTIC USE, A SMALL BWL DEPOSIT IN THE SAME AREA. IN ADDITION, THE AFGHAN NATIONAL PETROLEUM CO. (ANPEC) A DIVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES, WITH SOVIET TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, IS CURRENTLY EXPLORING FOR NATURAL GAS IN THE AREA OF HERAT IN THE NORTH-WEST, AND REPORTEDLY HAVE POSITIVE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS. FINALLY, THE FRENCH NATIONAL OIL CO.(TOTAL) HAS SIGNED AN EXPLORATION AGREEMENT WITH ANPEC, AND

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IS DOING PRELIMINARY GEOLOGICAL AND TECTONIC STUDIES IN THE SOUTH-

EASTERN BORDER AREA, WHICH IS A GEOLOGICAL EXTENSION OF TOTAL'S EXPLORATION AREA IN NORTHERN PAKISTAN.

3. THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES NOW INVITES INQUIRIES FROM U.S. COMPANIES INTERESTED IN EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION AGREEMENTS COVERING OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. THE AREAS WILL BE PRIMARILY IN THE SOUTH-WEST OF AFGHANISTAN, WHERE THERE ARE REPORTEDLY GOOD GEOLOGICAL INDICATORS, BUT COULD EXTEND TO OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING HERAT. THOSE INTERESTED SHOULD SEND A STATEMENT OF INTEREST AND AN OUTLINE OF THE COMPANY'S QUALIFICATIONS TO:

ANPEC
AFGHAN PETROLEUM EXPLORATION CO.
MINISTRY OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES
KABUL, AFGHANISTAN

THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE BEING COPIED ON SUCH LETTERS.

4. AFGHANISTAN CURRENTLY HAS NO PETROLEUM LAW, ALTHOUGH ONE IS IN DRAFT FORM. ANY AGREEMENT, THEREFORE, WOULD RESULT FROM DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE INTERESTED COMPANY AND THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN(GOA). ANPEC HAS VERY LIMITED EXPERIENCE EITHER IN EXPLORATION OR NEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS. THE QUOTE TOTAL UNQUOTE CONTRACT TOOK ALMOST TWO YEARS TO NEGOTIATE, BUT SECCEEDING AGREEMENTS MAY BE EASIER. INTERESTED COMPANIES SHOULD, HOWEVER, BE AWARE THAT DEALING WITH THE GOA MAY REQUIRE CONSIDERABLE PATIENCE AND WILL REQUIRE EXTENSIVE FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT. THE EMBASSY WILL BE PLEASED TO ASSIST TO THE EXTENT OF ITS ABILITY.
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